

REMARKS

Claims 1, 2, 4-18 and 21-23 are pending. Claims 4-18 are withdrawn. By this Amendment, claim 1 is amended and claim 3 is canceled. The features of canceled claim 3 are added to amended independent claim 1. No new matter is added.

Entry of the amendments is proper under 37 CFR §1.116 because the amendments do not raise any new issue requiring further search and/or consideration as the amendments amplify issues previously discussed throughout prosecution. The amendments are necessary and were not earlier presented because they are made in response to arguments raised in the final rejection. Entry of the amendments is thus respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 2 and 21-23 continue to read on the elected group. Rejoinder is requested for claim 18 when independent claim 1 is allowed.

The Office Action rejects claims 1-3 and 21-23 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over JP-A-2001-237073 to Oshita in view of JP-A-06-260398 to Miyaji. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Amended independent claim 1 recites, "wherein said spacers consist of a plurality of spherical bodies having a diameter that is substantially the same as said predetermined gap."

The Office Action, on page 2, appears to admit that Oshita fails to disclose the spacers of claim 1, and relies on Miyaji to disclose this feature.

Miyaji discloses glass particles 8 mixed with bonding agents 3A and 3B to create adhesive layer 3. (See Miyaji's Abstract, paragraph [0011] and Drawings 1(b), 2(a) and 2(b)). The glass particles 8 may have various diameters, since the only description regarding the diameter simply states that the diameters are not larger than 10 μm . (See Miyaji's paragraph [0011]). Moreover, the glass particles 8 have significantly smaller diameters than the vertical thickness of the adhesive layer 3. (See Miyaji's Drawing 2(b)). The glass particles 8 are dispersed in the adhesive layer 3 at varying positions in the vertical and horizontal directions,

so that a plurality of particles randomly overlap with each other in the vertical thickness direction. (See Miyaji's Drawing 2(b)). Because of this random dispersion of the glass particles 8, it is hard to precisely control the gap distance between the substrate and the mask member, and a vertical distance between a holding frame 1 and a mask substrate 2 depends largely on the amount of the glass particles 8, rather than the diameter of the glass particles 8. (See Miyaji's paragraph [0011] and Drawing 2(b)). In other words, because of the random dispersion of glass particles 8 into multiple glass particle vertical layers, Miyaji fails to disclose or suggest a diameter of glass particles 8 substantially the same as the vertical thickness of the adhesive layer 3.

On the other hand, the amended claim 1 recites that spacers consist of a plurality of spherical bodies having a diameter which is substantially the same as said predetermined gap. This feature is not disclosed or suggested by any of the applied references. This structure is fully supported by the specification which states "by applying pressure when adhering together the substrate 10 and the mask member 20, it is possible to arrange the spacers 38 so that they do not overlap one another and they are uniformly distributed over the junction region 36," as explained in the specification on page 19, lines 5-7.

As discussed above, Oshita and Miyaji, even if combined, fail to disclose or suggest wherein said spacers consist of a plurality of spherical bodies having a diameter which is substantially the same as said predetermined gap.

Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of the claims are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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